

Tehillim / Psalms 133 | ספר תהילים קלג

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Understanding the Meaning and Nature of Unity!

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 133:1-3*, the psalm opens saying, א שִׁיר הַמְעֵלוֹת לְדָוִד הַגֵּהָ : 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity! (NASB) If we are not living in harmony with our family (brothers and sisters in the Messiah), then we will not have the blessing of the Lord's strength and anointing in our lives. There is something about getting along that causes us to be blessed, strengthened, and secure. Does this involve compromise? Does unity mean we are to be in agreement with everything or on every topic? The binding force for unity is peace. We also know that God notices when people stand together as one in holiness and harmony. This pleases the Lord because it is the fulfillment of the commandment to love one another (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:18*). The Psalmist continues saying, ב כִּשְׁמֵן הַטּוֹב | עַל-הָרֹאשׁ יֵרֵד עַל-הַזָּקָן זָקֵן אֶהְרֹן שְׂיֵרֵד עַל-פִּי מְדוּתָיו: 133:2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, Coming down upon the beard, Even Aaron's beard, Coming down upon the edge of his robes. (NASB) The Psalmist parallels the joy of fellowship, peace, acceptance, and one-to-one dwelling together in unity, to the anointing oil that dripped down in upon the beard and the robe of Aaron. Whenever the anointing of God comes upon us in the Messiah Yeshua, the ultimate result is joy and peace. Upon the head of the Cohen HaGadol (High Priest) the oil run down commissioning him into service before the Lord. This oil represents gladness that flows down the beard, the garments, and to the skirts of his cloths. The Holy oil was used for anointing kings, priests, and sanctifying the sacred things in the temple. It was made with a special recipe described in the scriptures and it was explicitly forbidden for anybody to ce the oil recipe for anything other than holy purposes. The Psalm concludes saying, ג כְּטֵל־ : 133:3 It is like the dew of Hermon Coming down upon the mountains of Zion; For there the Lord commanded the blessing life forever. (NASB) The dew of Hermon and the mountains of Zion, it is interesting how the dew is paralleled to the unity of believers in the Messiah. The southern slopes of Mount Hermon peak rising to 2,236 m (7,336 ft) above sea level, one of the highest peaks in Israel. David's choice of these two metaphors extends the idea of "good" and "pleasant." Oil, running upon Aaron's head and down into his beard and onto his garments, to unity between brethren and the blessing of the Lord that is eternal.

| עברית | Hebrew | ארמי | Aramaic | ελληνικός | Greek |
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| ספר תהילים פרק קלג | ספר תהילים פרק קלג | סבר טוביה פרק קלג | סבר טוביה פרק קלג | ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 133 | ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 133 |
| א שִׁיר הַמְעֵלוֹת לְדָוִד הַגֵּהָ מֵה-טוֹב וּמֵה-נְעִים שְׁכַת אֲחִים גַּם-יַחַד: ב כִּשְׁמֵן הַטּוֹב עַל-הָרֹאשׁ יֵרֵד עַל-הַזָּקָן זָקֵן אֶהְרֹן שְׂיֵרֵד עַל-פִּי מְדוּתָיו: ג כְּטֵל-תְּרִמּוֹן שְׂיֵרֵד עַל-הַרְרֵי צִיּוֹן כִּי שָׁם צָנָה יְהוָה אֶת-הַבְּרָכָה חַיִּים עַד-הָעוֹלָם-הָעוֹלָם: | א שִׁיר הַמְעֵלוֹת לְדָוִד הַגֵּהָ מֵה-טוֹב וּמֵה-נְעִים שְׁכַת אֲחִים גַּם-יַחַד: ב כִּשְׁמֵן הַטּוֹב עַל-הָרֹאשׁ יֵרֵד עַל-הַזָּקָן זָקֵן אֶהְרֹן שְׂיֵרֵד עַל-פִּי מְדוּתָיו: ג כְּטֵל-תְּרִמּוֹן שְׂיֵרֵד עַל-הַרְרֵי צִיּוֹן כִּי שָׁם צָנָה יְהוָה אֶת-הַבְּרָכָה חַיִּים עַד-הָעוֹלָם-הָעוֹלָם: | א שִׁירָא דִּאֲתֹאמֵר עַל מְסוּקִיָּן דִּתְהוּמֵא לְדוּד הָא כִּמָּא טַב וּכְמָא בְּסִים לְמִיתַב צִיּוֹן וִירוּשַׁלַּם כְּתֵרִין אַחִין בְּרַם כְּחֹדָא: ב כְּמִשַׁח טַב דְּמַת-רַק עַל רִישָׁא נַחִית עַל דִּיקְנָא דִּיקְנִיָּה דִּאֲהֵרֵן דְּנַחִית עַל אִמְרָא דְּלְבוּשׁוּי: ג הֵיךְ כְּטֵלֵא דְּחֵרְמוֹן דְּנַחִית עַל טוּרֵי דְּצִיּוֹן אַרוּם תְּמֵן פְּקִיד יְהוּה יֵת בְּרַכְּ-תָא חַיִּי עַד עַלְמָא: | א שִׁירָא דִּאֲתֹאמֵר עַל מְסוּקִיָּן דִּתְהוּמֵא לְדוּד הָא כִּמָּא טַב וּכְמָא בְּסִים לְמִיתַב צִיּוֹן וִירוּשַׁלַּם כְּתֵרִין אַחִין בְּרַם כְּחֹדָא: ב כְּמִשַׁח טַב דְּמַת-רַק עַל רִישָׁא נַחִית עַל דִּיקְנָא דִּיקְנִיָּה דִּאֲהֵרֵן דְּנַחִית עַל אִמְרָא דְּלְבוּשׁוּי: ג הֵיךְ כְּטֵלֵא דְּחֵרְמוֹן דְּנַחִית עַל טוּרֵי דְּצִיּוֹן אַרוּם תְּמֵן פְּקִיד יְהוּה יֵת בְּרַכְּ-תָא חַיִּי עַד עַלְמָא: | 133:1 ὡδὴ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν τῷ Δαυὶδ ἰδοὺ δὴ τί καλὸν ἢ τί τερπνὸν ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ κατοικεῖν ἀδελφοὺς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ 133:2 ὡς μύρον ἐπὶ κεφαλῆς τὸ καταβαῖνον ἐπὶ πώγωνα τὸν πώγωνα τὸν Ααρων τὸ καταβαῖνον ἐπὶ τὴν ὄψαν τοῦ ἐνδύματος αὐτοῦ 133:3 ὡς δρόσος Ἀερμων ἢ καταβαίνουσα ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη Σιων ὅτι ἐκεῖ ἐνετείλατο κύριος τὴν εὐλογίαν καὶ ζωὴν ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος | 133:1 ὡδὴ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν τῷ Δαυὶδ ἰδοὺ δὴ τί καλὸν ἢ τί τερπνὸν ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ κατοικεῖν ἀδελφοὺς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ 133:2 ὡς μύρον ἐπὶ κεφαλῆς τὸ καταβαῖνον ἐπὶ πώγωνα τὸν πώγωνα τὸν Ααρων τὸ καταβαῖνον ἐπὶ τὴν ὄψαν τοῦ ἐνδύματος αὐτοῦ 133:3 ὡς δρόσος Ἀερμων ἢ καταβαίνουσα ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη Σιων ὅτι ἐκεῖ ἐνετείλατο κύριος τὴν εὐλογίαν καὶ ζωὴν ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος |

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| <p>Tehillim / Psalms 133 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity! 133:2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, Coming down upon the beard, Even Aaron's beard, Coming down upon the edge of his robes. 133:3 It is like the dew of Hermon Coming down upon the mountains of Zion; For there the Lord commanded the blessing life forever. (NASB)</p> | <p>Toviyah / Psalms 133 133:1 A song that was uttered on the ascents of the abyss. Behold, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of Zion and Jerusalem, together indeed like two brothers. 133:2 Like the fine oil that is poured on the head, coming down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, that comes down to the hem of his garments. 133:3 Like the dew of Hermon that comes down on the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore. (EMC)</p> | <p>Psalmoi / Psalms 133 A Song of Degrees. 133:1 See now! what is so good, or what so pleasant, as for brethren to dwell together? 133:2 It is as ointment on the head, that ran down to the beard, even the beard of Aaron; that ran down to the fringe of his clothing. 133:3 As the dew of Aermom, that comes down on the mountains of Sion: for there, the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for ever.</p> |
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In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 133:1-3*, the psalm opens saying, אִשִּׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת לְדָרוֹד הַיְהוָה 133:1 *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity!* (NASB) If we are not living in harmony with our family (brothers and sisters in the Messiah), then we will not have the blessing of the Lord's strength and anointing in our lives. The greatest commandment that we have been taught in the Torah and by Yeshua the Messiah is to love God our Father in heaven, and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. This command consists of three parts, and no one part can be fulfilled without also fulfilling the other two parts. The point is, how can one claim to love God if we do not love our neighbor or if we love them conditionally? How can we truly provide unconditional love to our neighbor if we do not have a loving relationship with the Lord God in heaven? Note how Yeshua said to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. How can we love our neighbor if we do not first love ourselves? In fact, it would seem impossible to truly love God and all his creation if we do not love ourselves since this is the context within which we are given the command. By claiming to love God, we profess that we love all he has created, and therefore are claiming to love his greatest creation of all, each man and woman in this world. To live together in unity is synonymous to not causing harm to one another. For example, a groom does not want to harm his new bride on their honeymoon. It is actually the opposite, he would be willing to lay his life down for his wife just as Christ laid his life down for ours. This is the attitude we are to have for each other if we are to live in unity. Rashi says "*How good and how pleasant for brothers to sit together*" - *Israel are called brothers, and this is talking about when G-d "sits" in the temple with them.* The commentary Rabbeinu Bahya on *Shemot / Exodus 4:14* states the following:

Rabbeinu Bahya on Shemot / Exodus 4:14 Part 2

וראך ושמח בלבו, "*when he sees you he will be happy in his heart.*" *The Torah informs us with this comment that neither of the two brothers would be jealous of the other's rank. This is what inspired David to sing (Psalms 133,1) "how good and how pleasant it is that brothers dwell together."* *The Torah did not speak about Aaron being happy בפיו, with his "mouth," i.e. expressing joy about Moses' appointment verbally, but it wrote that he was "happy in his heart."* *Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai comments that the heart which was so generous that it could be happy at the elevation to leadership of his younger brother was found worthy to wear the breastplate with the Urim veTumim (the parchment enabling him to communicate with G'd at will) as it is written "And they will be worn on the heart of Aaron" (Exodus 28,30 compare Tanchuma Shemot 27).*

In *Shemot / Exodus 4:14* (Then the anger of the Lord burned against Moses, and He said, 'Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you; when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. וַיִּחַר-אַף יְהוָה בְּמֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלֹא אֶהְרֵן אֶחָיוּד הַלֵּוִי יִדְעָתִי. ד וַיִּחַר-אַף יְהוָה בְּמֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלֹא אֶהְרֵן אֶחָיוּד הַלֵּוִי יִדְעָתִי. (פִּי-דַבָּר יְדַבֵּר הוּא וְגַם הֵנָּה-הוּא יֵצֵא לִקְרֹאתָךְ וְרִאֶךְ וְשָׂמַח בְּלִבּוֹ: the Torah reveals to us how the Lord was angry with Moshe for his reluctance to go to Egypt and do as the Lord God commands. Aaron, Moshe's brother arrives and is pleased in his heart to see his brother. He is not jealous of his rank, or his achievements, etc. The rabbis say this is what inspired David to write in *Tehillim / Psalms 133:1* of dwelling in unity. In *Shemot / Exodus 6:1*, we read the following, וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה עֲתָה תִרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה לְפָרְעֹה כִּי (ס) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה עֲתָה תִרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה לְפָרְעֹה כִּי Then the LORD said to Moses, "You shall soon (now you will, see what I will do to Pharaoh: he shall let them go because of a greater might; indeed, because of a greater might he shall drive them from his land." The rabbis connect this to the Akeda (the binding of Isaac) when Abraham was called to sacrifice his only son to the Lord on the mountain of Moriah. (see *Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 6:1, Part 1, and Bereshit / Genesis 22*) The Lord was saying to Moshe that when He subjected Abraham to a test of his faith, he did not question His commands as it is related to faithfulness as opposed to Moshe questioning the Lord sending him to Egypt to deliver Israel from bondage. The Lord was extending His authority to Moshe to deliver His people from bondage. Moshe however questioned that authority. Sforno speaks of Pharaoh and the Lord God delivering His people in the following way: *Sforno on Shemot / Exodus 6:1 Part 1, . עֲתָה תִרְאֶה, now that you have seen yourself the sin of Pharaoh who has the nerve to hold on to the Israelites with the authority of his office, you will see that he will not only release them voluntarily, but בְּיָד חֲזָקָה יִשְׁלַח־ם, not only will he release them, but he will be forced to get rid of them post haste due to the problems he will have while they are still in his country.* The Hebrew text states with a powerful hand (בְּיָד חֲזָקָה) he will be forced to send them (יִשְׁלַח־ם) out of his country. This is the way the text speaks of the Lord working powerfully on behalf of His people. Sforno speaks of the difficulties Pharaoh will have due to his not submitting to the will of God, and remaining in his abstinence against the command of the Lord. It is interesting that if Pharaoh had obeyed the command of God all of Egypt would have been spared. The authority of God in our lives as we humble our hearts before Him according to His Word is connected to faithfulness and to the commands in the Torah. Notice how the release with authority is an issue we all deal with in relation to our sin. If we hold on to sin it is like being enslaved to sin. The rabbinic analysis of *Shemot / Exodus 6:1* states that "now you will see" (עֲתָה תִרְאֶה) is a reference to Moshe witnessing the redemption of Israel if he would have faith and be faithful to God's command. This is what it means to live and walk in faith! The Lord wants to use you in the midst of your brokenness and imperfections. What we find here is Moshe speaking to the Lord God about the situation of Israel becoming worse when the Lord entered into the picture, and the failure to speak to the rock (*Bamidbar / Numbers 20:5-14*), these two things combined lead to Moshe not being allowed to lead the conquest of the Land of Canaan. What these things teach us about ourselves is to maintain our faithfulness to the Lord regardless of the situations that we encounter in life, not to blame the Lord for our calamity, and to do as God commands, not taking matters into our own hands under the assumption that we know better.

There is something about getting along that causes us to be blessed, strengthened, and secure. Does this involve compromise? Does unity mean we are to be in agreement with everything or on every topic? Consider the way in which the rabbis in the Talmud disagree with one another, yet they have unity to discuss their differences in opinion and interpretation. The power of unity is found within the concept of being at peace. The Lord God Almighty notices when people stand together as one in holiness, harmony, and community. This does not necessarily mean that we will always agree with one another. Having unity in being at peace, this pleases the Lord because it is the fulfillment of the commandment to love one another (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:18*).

ב כִּשְׁמֵן הַטּוֹב | עַל-הָרֹאשׁ יֵרֵד עַל-הַזָּקָן זָקֵן אֶהְרֵן לְשִׂירָד עַל-פִּי מְדוּתָיו: The Psalmist continues saying, 133:2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, Coming down upon the beard, Even Aaron's beard, Coming down upon the edge of his robes. (NASB) The Psalmist parallels the joy of fellowship, peace, acceptance,

and one-to-one dwelling together in unity, to the anointing oil that dripped down upon the beard and the robe of Aaron. The primary purpose of anointing with the holy anointing oil was to cause the anointed persons or objects to become qodesh, or “*most holy*” (*Shemot / Exodus 30:29*). The holy anointing oil formed an integral part of the ordination of the priesthood and the High Priest as well as in the consecration of the articles of the Tabernacle (*Shemot / Exodus 30:26*). Originally, the oil was used exclusively for the priests and the Tabernacle articles but was later extended to include prophets and kings (*1 Samuel 10:1*). We are also told in the Apostolic Writings to anoint the sick / weak (*James 5:14*). In the book of James, this Apostle calls for the elders to anoint the sick/weak, defeated believers with oil. This conveys the responsibility for more mature and seasoned believers to stimulate, encourage, strengthen, and refresh (*Luke 7:46*) such persons who find themselves to be sick or weak. Isaiah wrote, “*From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil*” (*Isaiah 1:6*). Oil is ascribed to having healing properties, to soften, and sooth a wound. Isaiah is saying due to the lack of godly leaders, the people of the nation had not had their spiritual wounds treated. David expressed God’s gracious, compassionate, spiritual restoration of him in his familiar words: “*You have anointed my head with oil*” (*Tehillim / Psalms 23:5*). The anointing oil has the sense of restoration and healing according to the Psalm. The anointing of oil, prayer, and restoration is to be done in the name of the Lord. All encouragement is to be consistent with the Word of God meaning that it is to be done in the name of the Father and the Son. To anoint and pray in the name of the Messiah is to ask what He would want; to minister in the name of the Messiah is to serve others on His behalf (*John 14:13-14*).

Whenever the Spirit of the Lord comes upon us in the Messiah Yeshua, the ultimate result is joy and peace. Upon the head of the Cohen HaGadol (High Priest) the oil run down commissioning him into service before the Lord. This oil represents gladness that flows down the beard, the garments, and to the skirts of his cloths. The Holy oil was used for anointing kings, priests, and sanctifying the sacred things in the temple. In the Apostolic Writings, we read of two times when people were anointed with oil. The first occasion (*Mark 6:13*) is descriptive of certain events, and the second occasion (*James 5:14*) is prescriptive for the elders of a local church. In the first case, this practice is found in the Gospel of Mark after Yeshua had sent the disciples out to preach and had given them authority to heal the crowds we read the following, “*And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them*” (6.13). However, Mark does not tell us why they anointed the people with oil, just that they did and healing was accompanied with the anointing with oil. In *James 5:14*, we read the following, “*Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.*” The command is clearly described as a prescription for the sick. We also read of another time when Yeshua spoke a parable and used the oil in descriptions of healing. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Yeshua says the Samaritan “*went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him*” (*Luke 10.34*). The description of pouring on oil is the oil having a soothing condition upon the skin. James wrote what he did about putting oil upon someone who was sick, did he have in mind what we read in the Torah, “*After you put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons, anoint and ordain them. Consecrate them so they may serve me as priests.*” The concept here was to anoint the priest with oil “*setting apart for the special attention and service of God.*” The oil could be used as a physical demonstration / illustration to the sick and serve as a means of saying, “*we are placing you in God’s merciful hands.*”

The rabbinic commentary states the following concerning this psalm.

Rabbeinu Bahya, Vayikra / Leviticus 6:3 Part 2

One may also understand the very word מָדוֹ as referring to “garment,” such as when the word appears in Samuel I 17,39: מַעַל לְמַדְיוֹ, “on top of his garment.” The word occurs in that context also in Psalms 133,2 עַל פִּי מְדוֹתָיו, “over the top of his robe.” If that is the meaning of the word מָדוֹ here it automatically includes all of the Priest’s garments. Onkelos also translated the word as לְבוּשֵׁין, “garments”. The ethical teaching of all this is that when per-

forming sacred tasks, especially in the Temple, regardless of how demeaning the same task would be considered for a socially highly placed individual outside the sacred precincts, one must wear the finest garments in order to enhance the reputation of the Lord in whose honor this whole service is being performed. If this holds true, we may learn that even when in the synagogue or the Yeshivah while studying Torah it is only elementary good manners vis-a-vis G'd whose Torah we study to be properly attired. We have learned from King David (Psalms 57,9) “awake, O my honor! Awake, o harp and lyre! I will waken the dawn.” David did not speak about “Your honor”, i.e. the Lord’s honor, but he spoke about his own dignity, honor. He addresses himself, admonishing himself that his honor and dignity are of no consequence at all. We know that he lived up to this when he danced in front of the Holy Ark so that even his wife Michal considered such behavior as unseemly in a King (compare Samuel II 6,14). We have an additional verse on that subject by David in verse 22 of that same chapter where he explains to Michal: “and dishonor myself even more, and be low in my own esteem, but amongst the slave-girls that you speak of I will be honored.”

Rabbeinu Bahya, Shemot 4:14 Part 2

וראך ושמח בלבו, “when he sees you he will be happy in his heart.” The Torah informs us with this comment that neither of the two brothers would be jealous of the other’s rank. This is what inspired David to sing (Psalms 133,1) “how good and how pleasant it is that brothers dwell together.” The Torah did not speak about Aaron being happy בפיו, with his “mouth,” i.e. expressing joy about Moses’ appointment verbally, but it wrote that he was “happy in his heart.” Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai comments that the heart which was so generous that it could be happy at the elevation to leadership of his younger brother was found worthy to wear the breastplate with the Urim veTumim (the parchment enabling him to communicate with G’d at will) as it is written “And they will be worn on the heart of Aaron” (Exodus 28,30 compare Tanchuma Shemot 27).

The anointing oil was meant to sanctify, to set apart, and the rabbis say this was meant for an ethical lesson. The ethical lesson is no matter how small the task one is involved in when serving the Lord, one is to have good manners, joy, kindness, love, patience, and proper attire. This is the manner in which we are to conduct ourselves regardless of whether we are actively serving the Lord or in our day-to-day lives. The reason being, we are to consider the One whom we represent and honor His name! Note how Rabbeinu Bahya states joy is a matter of pride in one’s heart. If one is not overjoyed for his fellow, then one should check his heart for pride and repent. The silent joy described in Aaron and Moshe’s case is an illustration that we are to have pure and innocent hearts before God being joyful for the blessing that falls upon others.

ג כָּטֶל-חֶרְמוֹן שִׁירָד עַל-הַרְרֵי צִיּוֹן כִּי שָׁם | צָנָה יְהוָה אֶת-הַבְּרָכָה חַיִּים עַד- , 133:3 הָעוֹלָם:
It is like the dew of Hermon Coming down upon the mountains of Zion; For there the Lord commanded the blessing life forever. (NASB) The dew of Hermon and the mountains of Zion, it is interesting how the dew is paralleled to the unity of believers in the Messiah. The southern slopes of Mount Hermon peak raising to 2,236 m (7,336 ft) above sea level, one of the highest peaks in Israel. David’s choice of these two metaphors extends the idea of “good” and “pleasant.” Oil, running upon Aaron’s head and down into his beard and onto his garments, to unity between brethren and the blessing of the Lord that is eternal. The reason David may have chosen to write of Hermon in the context of these things is because water descends down from the mountain to Zion. Zion represents a place of worship, the city of God, the people of Israel, and is a metaphor for all of those things, in the context of unity, the presence of God descending down upon His people as the dew. The rabbinic commentary states the following:

Rabbeinu Bahya, Bamidbar 21:19 Part 4

Remember that the numerical value of the word שִׁירָה is the same as that of תַּפְלָה, i.e. 515.

Both words appear in the same verse and are compared to one another; to wit: ‘יומם יצוה ה’ חסדו ובלילה שירה, עמי תפלה לאל חי ”By day may the Lord vouchsafe His fanciful care, so that at night a song to Him may be with me, a prayer to G’d my life” (Psalms 42,9). In this verse the psalmist speaks of שירה, (noun) when in fact he should have spoken of שירו, an imperative of the verb “to sing.” When the Torah writes in our paragraph that the Israelites sang זאת השירה הזאת, you are already aware of the meaning of the word זאת, that in kabbalistic terms it is a reference to the emanation מלכות, the link between the העשיה, our terrestrial world and the next higher kind of “world” the emanation יסוד, lowest level of the היצירה. The terrestrial world we live in is directly “inspired,” באצלת, from this emanation known as מלכות or זאת. The mystical dimension of Lamentations 2,19: קומי רני: בראש אשמורות, בלילה לראש אשמורות שפכי כמים לבך, is that the prophet does not speak of לראש אשמורות, which would mean that the supplication discussed in that verse takes place during the early part of morning, but he said לראש אשמורות, “to the head of these watches of the night”. The speaker addresses celestial forces of the emanations. He appeals to the ראש, the head, i.e. the highest of these forces, the tenth emanation, to Hashem Himself. In the song offered by the people of Israel here, the words עלי באר ענו לה are also an appeal in the first instance to the באר, the well, the lowest of the emanations. By saying עלי באר, they encourage that force to rise up to the highest emanation, the source of all blessing whence their prayers will be answered, i.e. ענו לה. The reason they called the emanation זאת or מלכות by the name באר, well, is that a well collects water, the essence of all blessings on earth. This lowest emanation is the receptacle of G’d’s outpourings of blessing. The simile of באר as a vessel collecting G’d’s bounty recurs again and again in the Sefer Habahir of Rabbi Nechunyah ben Hakanah. In his book the terms באר and כסא represent the lowest and the highest (כתר) emanations respectively. [The author proceeds to trace the journey of such prayers (songs) through the various emanations until they reach the highest emanation as represented by similes in our text. I have contented myself with providing you, the reader, with an outline of his approach. Ed.]

The idea is to seek the joy of the Lord by day so by night we will have songs of blessing to the Lord rather than requests. The commentary takes a kabbalistic approach to the descriptions of this world and the heavenly world speaking of the well that contains water for life and blessing, to the one who is the receptacle of God’s outpourings of blessing. The idea that is illustrated in the Psalm as mount Hermon and mount Zion is the people representing Zion and the Lord representing mount Hermon, He is the source of life giving waters to the people that sustains them. We trust and rely upon the One who is greater than us to sustain us each day.

Rashi states that the outpouring of blessing that is found in the anointing oil is not as significant as the reputation of the person who walks in God’s ways.

Rashi on Ecclesiastes 7:1 Part 1

Better a good name than precious oil. A fine reputation for a person is better than precious oil, and on the day of [his] death that reputation is better than [it was] on the day he was born. For this reason, a good name is compared to oil in preference to other liquids, for [if] you put water into oil, it rises and floats, and is distinguishable, but other liquids, [if] you put water into them, it becomes absorbed.

The righteousness of God’s ways as they are lived out in our lives, as they demonstrate the Lord dwelling in our hearts, as they show evidence of the Lord God our Father in heaven working in our lives, is more

important than the anointing oil itself. The oil is compared to a life that honors God because of the physical properties of the oil, its hydrophilic nature. Note how water is understood in the Scriptures (see Parashat Behaalotcha, the last Torah portion in Vayikra / Leviticus) and in the rabbinic literature as a blessing from God. The Psalm states this blessing is that which descends to Zion from the highest mountains. This blessing of God transforms His people in the sense of righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. When mixed with the oil, water floats to the top and is a distinguishable phase. The manner in which the Lord God works in our lives is to come forth to the surface and be recognizable as a distinct phase, that which distinguishes us from the nations as holy unto God. The one who partakes in sin (e.g. adding a non-polar organic chemical to the oil) it becomes one homogeneous phase and is indistinguishable from the oil. Sin has this effect, such that one does not look different but is as the nations in his or her appearance. The Psalm states, **ג כָּטֹל־** *133:3 It is like the dew of Hermon Coming down upon the mountains of Zion; For there the Lord commanded the blessing life forever. (NASB)* The dew of Hermon and the mountains of Zion, remind us of how the Lord wants to bless us but also wants to be a part of our lives to help us to live for him, and to have love for one another to the extent of the unity of believers in the Messiah. This love is known by everyone who knows us that this is because we love God and choose to serve Him when we have love for one another. (*John 13:35*). Let's Pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 133* has 2 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, and 2. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 133, Part 1 and 2*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 133, Part 1, and 2

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*A song of ascents; of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard; even Aaron's beard (Tehillim / Psalms 133:1-2).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*The rabbis taught that two drops of ointment like two pearls hung upon the beard of Aaron.*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis describe unity as that of ointment that pours down upon the head.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis ask the question of whether Moshe had poured the anointing oil upon Moshe properly or not?
- The Concluding phrase says, “*Thereupon a divine voice came forth and said, Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity (Tehillim / Psalms 131:1), As Moshe did not break the Torah, so neither did you, Aaron, break it.*”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*Like the dew of Hermon, that comes down upon the mountains of Zion; for the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forever (Tehillim / Psalms 133:3).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*All goodly rewards and comforts come out of Zion.*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis speak of the

dew of the mountain descending upon Zion.

- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis describe the blessing that comes down as dew results in the blessings coming out of Zion.
- There is no concluding phrase.

Midrash Tehillim 133 Part 1 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, “A song of ascents; of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard; even Aaron’s beard (Tehillim / Psalms 133:1-2).” The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “The rabbis taught that two drops of ointment like two pearls hung upon the beard of Aaron.” The entire midrash states the following:

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| <p>מדרש תהלים פרק קלג סימן א א שיר המעלות לדוד, הנה מה טוב ומה נעים שבת אחים גם יחד, כשמן הטוב על הראש יורד על הזקן זקן אהרן שיורד על פי מדותיו. שנו רבותינו כמין שני טפי מרגליות היו תלויין לאהרן בזקנו, אמר רב פפא תאנא כשהוא מספר עולות ויושב בות לו בעקרי זקנו ועל דבר זה דאג משה, אמר שמא ח"ו מעלתי בשמן המשחה, יצאת בת קול ואמרה כטל חרמון, מה טל אין בו מעילה, אף שמן המשחה [שבזקן אהרן] אין בו מעילה, ועדיין היה אהרן דואג, שמא משה לא מעל ואני מעלתי, יצאת בת קול ואמרה הנה מה טוב ומה נעים שבת אחים גם יחד, מה משה לא מעל, אף אתה לא מעלת.</p> | <p>Midrash Tehillim 133, Part 1 1. A song of ascents; of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard; even Aaron’s beard (Tehillim / Psalms 133:1-2). The rabbis taught that two drops of ointment like two pearls hung upon the beard of Aaron. According to Rabbi Pappa, there is a tradition that whenever Aaron spoke, the two drops would ascend and stay at the roots of his beard. And because of this fact, Moshe was anxious and used to say, God forbid, but is it possible that unknowingly I trespassed in the application of the holy oil? Thereupon a divine voice came forth and said, Like the dew of Hermon (Tehillim / Psalms 132:3) that is, as the Torah of unknowing trespass in the use of the holy things of the Lord does not apply to the dew of Hermon, so the Torah of unknowing trespass in the use of the holy things of the Lord does not apply to the oil of anointment that ran down Aaron’s beard. Aaron, however, was still anxious, for he said, While it is possible that Moshe did not break the Torah of unknowing trespass, I may have broken it. Thereupon a divine voice came forth and said, Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity (Tehillim / Psalms 131:1), As Moshe did not break the Torah, so neither did you, Aaron, break it.</p> |
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The midrash opens with a description of unity as that of the oil that was poured down upon Aaron and ran down his beard. The rabbis taught that two drops of ointment was like two pearls that hung on the beard of Aaron. Considering the way the rabbis describe the anointing oil, coupled with the description of the beads of oil running down his beard, the oil had the effect of taming the beard. This reminds me of No-Shave November, when some men choose to grow their beards. When one does this after the beard becomes a certain length, it becomes unruly and difficult to keep its shape. Today there are many beard oil recipes for taming the beard during the shaggiest moments. This is paralleled to the Torah by drawing this into the context of Aaron’s beard and the anointing oil. The Torah is meant to tame the soul. Consider what is written in the Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:7.

Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:7

Great is Torah, for it gives life to those who do it in this world and in the next world, as it says: “For they are life to those that find them, and healing to all his flesh” (Proverbs 4:22); and it says, “It will be healing for your navel, and tonic to your bones” (Proverbs 3:8). And it says, “It is a tree of life to those who hold it, and those who grasp it are happy” (Proverbs 3:18). And it says, “For they are an accompaniment of grace for your head, and a necklace

for your throat” (Proverbs 1:9). And it says, “She will give your head an accompaniment of grace; with a crown of glory she will protect you” (Proverbs 4:9). And it says, “For by me your days will be multiplied, and you will be given additional years of life” (Proverbs 9:11). And it says, “Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left is wealth and honor” (Proverbs 3:16); and it says, “For length of days and years of life and peace will be added to you” (Proverbs 3:2); and it says, “her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace” (Proverbs 3: 17). (גדולה תורה ושהיא נותנת חיים לעשייה בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא), (שנאמר (משלי ד) כי חיים הם למצאיהם ולכל בשרו מרפא. ואומר (שם ג) רפאות תהי לשך וישקוי לעצמותיה. ואומר (שם ג) יעץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה ותמכיה מאשר. ואומר (שם א) כי לנית חן הם לראשה וענקים לגרגרתיה. ואומר (שם ד) תתן לראשה לנית חן עטרת תפארת תמגנה. ואומר (שם ט) כי בי רבו ימיה ויוסיפו לה שנות חיים. ואומר (שם ג) ארה ימים בימינה בשמאלה עשר וכבוד. ואומר (שם) כי ארה ימים ושנות חיים ושלום יוסיפו לה. ואומר (שם) דרכיה דרכי נעים וכל נתיבותיה שלום:

Notice how the rabbis say there is life in God’s Torah, that one finds healing, is happy, and finds grace in the Torah of God. Mercy is found in the Torah, the reason being, the Lord provides for us the way of Teshuvah (repentance) and what it means to turn from sin that is coupled to the promises of God. The proverbs are given as the rabbinic explanation for the benefit of the Torah, one finds length of days, an addition of years, wealth and honor, and a life that is filled with peace. Does this sound like the typical definition of the Law of God today? The Torah is described as a way of life for God’s people and the road upon which we are to set our feet upon. The reason being, the Torah speaks of the faithfulness of God to those who trust in Him.

The Mishnah Pirkei Avot continues saying the following:

Mishnah Pirkei Avot 6:9

Said Rabbi Yosi ben Kisma: One time I was walking on the road, and a man met me, and greeted me, and I returned the greeting. He said to me, “My master, from which place are you?” I said to him, “I am from a great city of sages and scribes.” He said to me, “My master, do you wish to live among us in our place, and I will give you a thousand of thousands of golden Dinarim, and precious stones and pearls?” I said to him, “If you were to give me all the silver, gold, precious stones and pearls in the world, I would not live but in a place of Torah.” And so it is written in the book of Psalms by David, King of Israel (Psalms 119:72), “The law of Your mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.” Moreover, at the time of a person’s passing, neither silver, gold, nor precious stones nor pearls accompany him, but Torah and good deeds alone, as it says (Proverbs 6:22), “When you walk, it shall lead you, when you lie down, it shall watch over you; and when you awake, it shall be your conversation”; “When you walk, it shall lead you” - in this world; “when you lie down, it shall watch over you” - in the grave; “and when you awake, it shall be your conversation” - for the world to come. And it says (Haggai 2:8), “Mine is the silver, and Mine the gold, speaks the Lord of hosts.” אמר רבי יוסי בן קסמא, פעם אחת הייתי מהלך בדרך ופגע בי אדם) אחד, ונתן לי שלום, והתנחתי לו שלום. אמר לי, רבי, מאיזה מקום אתה. אמרתי לו, מעיר גדולה של חכמים ושל סופרים אני. אמר לי, רבי, רצונך שתדור עמנו במקומנו, ואני אתן לך אלה אלהים דיגרי זזהב ואבנים טובות ומרגליות. אמרתי לו, בני, אם אתה נותן לי כל כסף וזזהב ואבנים טובות ומרגליות שבעולם, איני דר אלא במקום תורה. ולא עוד, אלא שבשעת פטירתו של אדם אין מלוין לו לאדם לא כסף ולא זזהב ולא אבנים טובות ומרגליות, אלא תורה ומעשים טובים בלבד, שנאמר (משלי ו) בהתהלכה תנחה אתה, בשכבה תשמר עליה, ובהקיצות היא תשיחה. בהתהלכה תנחה אתה, בעולם הזה, בשכבה תשמר עליה, בקבר, ובהקיצות היא תשיחה, לעולם הבא. וכן כתוב בספר תהלים על ידי דוד מלך ישראל (תהלים קיט), טוב לי תורת פיך מאלפי זזהב וכסף. ואומר (חגי ב)

(לי הקסר ולי הזנה אמר ה' צבאות:

The rabbis describe the blessing of the Torah with a parable of two men who meet on the road. One asks the other where he is from. The rabbi speaks of being from a city that studies Torah. He goes on to say that being in a place that studies the Torah is more precious than all gold and silver in the world. The reason being, *Mishley / Proverbs 6:22* “When you walk, it shall lead you, when you lie down, it shall watch over you; and when you awake, it shall be your conversation”; Silver and gold will not lead us in this world, except to pride and greed. The Torah however will guide us in the ways of God. This is why we are told in the Apostolic Writings that the Messiah will guide us in the ways of God, he was set as our example to live, to walk, and to serve the Lord even unto death.

In the Midrash, the rabbis speak of the anointing oil as two pearls that hung upon the beard of Aaron. They continue saying the following:

According to Rabbi Pappa, there is a tradition that whenever Aaron spoke, the two drops would ascend and stay at the roots of his beard. And because of this fact, Moshe was anxious and used to say, God forbid, but is it possible that unknowingly I trespassed in the application of the holy oil? Thereupon a divine voice came forth and said, Like the dew of Hermon (Tehillim / Psalms 132:3) that is, as the Torah of unknowing trespass in the use of the holy things of the Lord does not apply to the dew of Hermon, so the Torah of unknowing trespass in the use of the holy things of the Lord does not apply to the oil of anointment that ran down Aaron's beard. Aaron, however, was still anxious, for he said, While it is possible that Moshe did not break the Torah of unknowing trespass, I may have broken it. (Midrash Tehillim 133 Part 1)

There is something about the oil ascending and descending upon the beard of Aaron (to the root of his hair) that is connected to sin according to the Midrash. We read in *Vayikra / Leviticus 8:10* *Moses then took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. (NASB)* Moshe took the anointing oil and consecrated Aaron and the Tabernacle. He made Aaron and the Tabernacle holy unto God. The problem was, Aaron knew that within he has sinned, and admitted that he may have also unknowingly sinned against God (*Vayikra / Leviticus 5:17*). The Lord God of Israel knows us intimately. Yeshua said in *Matthew 10:30* “the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” In *1 John 4:16* we are told “We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in Him.” The way the Lord has shown us His great love is demonstrated in His power to save, as spoken of by John in *Revelation 1:5* and from *Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood 1:6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (NASB)* The power of God is found in His ability to release us from sin, to overcome sin in our lives. The author of Hebrews states the following:

Hebrews 10:15-22

10:15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, 10:16 ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And on their mind I will write them,’ He then says, 10:17 ‘And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’ 10:18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin. 10:19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 10:20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 10:21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 10:22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (NASB)

The author of Hebrews connects the Torah being written upon our hearts and our having been sprinkled and

made clean with the pure water. The anointing of Aaron was to typify the anointing of the Messiah by the Spirit, which was not given by measure to him. Oil is a widely understood symbol of the Holy Spirit as we read Yeshua speaking on the book of Isaiah saying, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed...”* (Luke 4:18) Here the Spirit of the Lord and the anointing oil are linked together which naturally draws in the concept of sin (uncleanness) versus purity. By the power of God and His indwelling Spirit we are empowered to overcome sin in our lives.

Midrash Tehillim 133 Part 1 concludes saying, *“Thereupon a divine voice came forth and said, Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity (Tehillim / Psalms 131:1), As Moshe did not break the Torah, so neither did you, Aaron, break it.”* The midrash speaks of the unity of believers as it is connected to Torah observance (obeying God’s Word) and being at peace with the Lord in heaven. The prophet Isaiah wrote, *“For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace”* (Isaiah 55:12). The Lord God of Israel’s best for our lives is that we will be led forth in peace and joy according to His Word. When we determine our hearts and our lives to do these things, we say, *“I’m not going to allow circumstances to rob my joy?”* In making this declaration we are declaring the testimony of God in our lives bringing glory to His Name!

Midrash Tehillim 133 Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, *“Like the dew of Hermon, that comes down upon the mountains of Zion; for the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forever (Tehillim / Psalms 133:3).”* The פתיחה (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, *“All goodly rewards and comforts come out of Zion.”* The entire Midrash states the following:

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| <p>מדרש תהלים פרק קלג סימן ב ב כטל הרמון שיורד על הררי ציון. כל פעולות ונחמות טובות מציון.</p> | <p>Midrash Tehillim 113, Part 2 2. <i>Like the dew of Hermon, that comes down upon the mountains of Zion; for the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forever (Tehillim / Psalms 133:3). All goodly rewards and comforts come out of Zion.</i></p> |
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The expression *“the dew of Hermon”* seems to be a geographical puzzle (location in the north near Lebanon) being some distance from Zion in the south, the question is how could the dew of Hermon physically descend upon Zion. The point of the Psalmist was Hermon being the loftiest peak in the land of Israel that lays upon its boarder. Its snow caps oversee the surrounding country and peoples, both the surrounding nations and all of Israel. This draws in a parallel that the Lord God is over all, He sees all, he knows all, and He looks for those who would seek Him from the nation of Israel to all of the world. From the mountains of Zion the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for everlasting. Drawing near to the Lord and His people in His Messiah and in His Word are the central tenants behind the meaning of *“All goodly rewards and comforts come out of Zion.”* Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

Thank You Lord for Your mercy and the great work that you are doing in our lives. We believe You are able to overcome all things, from saving us from our enemies, to the deliverance from sin, and even to work in our hearts to deeply, truly, and honestly seek you all the days of our lives. We recognize the weaknesses in our strength and resolve to serve You and to do what is expected, to be humble and to pray and to remain in Your word. Lord help us to have the strength to stand for truth and life, to have the desire to seek You in prayer and in Your Word, to have faith in Yeshua Your Messiah, and to love our neighbor each day. We thank You Lord for Your continued faithfulness to Your promises and to us. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua's (Jesus') Name we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever

Notes